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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/489,774	01/24/2000	Masayuki Nishiguchi		6241

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EXAMINER

MEI, XU

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2644

DATE MAILED: 12/12/2001

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/489,774

Applicant(s)
Nishiguchi et al.

Examiner
Xu Mei

Art Unit
2644



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Jan 24, 2000

2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.

3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 35 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) ☒ Claim(s) 4-8 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) ☒ Claim(s) 4-8 is/are rejected.

7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirements.

Application Papers

9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved.

12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

13) ☒ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of:

1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 07/600,818.

3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

15) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

18) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____

16) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

19) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

17) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____

20) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claim 8 is objected to because of the following informalities: on line 29, "a number of **this**" is misspelled, it appears should be --a number of **bits**--. Appropriate correction is required.

Double Patenting

2. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321[©] may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

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3. Claims 4-8 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 5,640,458 in view of Yamamoto et al. (US-5,056,145, hereinafter, Yamamoto).

The conflicting claims 4 and 8 are the same in scope of claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 5,640,458 with the exception of the headphone-type audio signal reproducing apparatus with a user-removable semiconductor memory unit.

Yamamoto discloses a digital sound data storing device which including user-removable semiconductor memory unit, i.e., IC memory card, for improving the reliability of the device, reduce the weight of the device (col. 2, lines 34-54), and allow user more freedom to select/choose various recorded data. It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teaching of Yamamoto with user-removable semiconductor memory unit for the audio signal reproducing apparatus as taught in claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 5,640,458 in order to improving the reliability of the audio signal reproducing apparatus (reliability and redundancy of the IC memory), reduce the weight of the device (light weight property of the removable IC memory card) and allow user the freedom of select/choose various recorded data (the removable IC memory unit is an external digital data storage unit is insertable into and detachable from the audio signal reproducing apparatus).

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Regarding claims 5-6, U.S. Patent No. 5,056,145 or Yamamoto discloses the claimed limitations such as battery, D/A converter, headphone unit with a left and a right earphone units for placement at respective left and right ears of the user.

Regarding claim 7, the specific playback time of the IC memory unit/card of Yamamoto would have been inherent by the structure of the memory unit/card itself.

Furthermore, there is no apparent reason why applicant was prevented from presenting claims corresponding to those of the instant application during prosecution of the application which matured into a patent. See *In re Schneller*, 397 F.2d 350, 158 USPQ 210 (CCPA 1968). See also MPEP § 804.

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Nishiguchi et al. (US-5,930,758) and Takiguchi et al. are made of record here as pertinent art to the claimed invention. The cited references disclose headphone units capable of providing digital audio signal processing.

5. Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

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or faxed to:

(703) 872-9314 (for Technology Center 2600 only)

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121
Crystal Drive, Arlington. VA., Sixth Floor (Receptionist).

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Xu Mei whose telephone number is 703-308-6610. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (9:30-6:00), alternate Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Forester W Isen can be reached on 703-305-4386.

The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9314 for regular communications and 703-872-9314 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Technology Center 2600 Customer Service Office whose telephone number is 703-306-0377.



Xu Mei
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2644
12/06/2001